Avoid Project Paralysis With Smart Resource Alignment

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Problem: Limited Resources

There is incredible pressure to change operations in health care delivery. In the clinic and the hospital, where the patient interacts with the care delivery team, providers must create often complex transformations to continue to be financially successful, keeping their doors open to the community.

EMR implementations, through-put redesign, socioeconomic health determinants screenings and care navigation – this is just a short list of internal operations that your organization may be struggling to implement. In the beginning, they all require a "lift," or a short-term effort to move your equipment, team and space to a new configuration to begin delivering a new level of quality service. But the lift can be costly – it means that you must apply resources that are currently being utilized to a totally new task.

Failing to change, however, can be even more costly. In a market that is transitioning to paying for quality over volume, organizations that are not set up to meet the new payor expectations will see rapidly evaporating margins. Not investing in the "lift" is not an option for the organization that wants to remain competitive.

A classic option is to hire short-term, additional external resources. While our organization provides these types of resources – project managers, subject-matter experts, incredibly talented business analysts and consultants – a purely or heavily external team like this can be cost-prohibitive, especially for projects that deliver improvements to service lines that are mission critical but do not have immediate ROI.

How can you still succeed if you do not have the financial resources to hire a completely external project team or hire dedicated positions to complete project goals? How do you avoid paralysis?

Proposed Solution: Create the Team

Getting a win in these tight situations requires intentional project team construction from your existing

resources – your current staff and leadership. Chances are that you have employees who have an interest and are subject-matter experts in your organization's current operations. Leverage those employees who are most capable and most interested in a project's goals by putting together a clearly defined project team.

Team Member	Role	Optimal Member Characteristics
Executive Sponsor	• Accountable for project delivering intended business value • Works with Chair to set deliverables, timeline, budget and team members • Gives official authority for the completion of the scope of work	• Has the bandwidth to meet weekly with the chair for updates • Has the ability to champion the project for the duration of the project • Believes completely in the desired deliverables of the project
Chair	• Responsible to the executive champion for achieving the agreed upon deliverables • Transforms deliverables into vision • Leads project team	• Can motivate other employees to achieve goals • Has established relationships with most project stakeholders
Assistant Chair (Project Manager)	• Organizes project team • Owns the schedule and budget	• Incredibly detail oriented • Motivated to close the loop on all outstanding items
Member	• A subject-matter expert • A content generator	• An employee that will be directly affected by the changes made • A driven employee(s) seeking growth in the organization

Proposed Solution: Establish the Plan
While it is tempting to launch the project as soon as the right people have been gathered, it is critical to establish what will be created, when it will be done, and how much will it cost.

What – Your deliverables
Prioritize the top things that must exist in order to ensure project success, and make them tangible – not screener training, but screener training curriculum and documentation that training has occurred. Not a new process, but a workflow diagram, an executive summary, and evidence that the new process is achieving the desired results. Tell the project team exactly what you need to see to know that the project is succeeding.

When – Your timeline
Share your desired timeline, knowing that it is the starting point of a conversation with the project team. As they plan how to deliver your priorities, they may identify additional factors with implications for the timeline. It will be the project chair's job to evaluate these implications with the team, bringing you the trade-offs and options that need to be considered.

How Much – Your budget
Similar to the timeline, your budget will need to be validated by the project team. Your project chair will continue to negotiate this budget with you as the project continues, and you will need to approve or deny changes to the deliverables, the timeline and the budget throughout.

This is simple project management, of course. But simple project management is often all that is needed to get the project that you need to make happen, happen.

Get an Edge
COPE Health Solutions partners with our clients to help them achieve visionary, market relevant health solutions. We focus on all aspects of strategy, population health management, CMS demonstrations, DSRIP and workforce development for clients across the health care continuum, including hospitals, health systems, physician organizations and health plans.

Our multidisciplinary team of health care experts provides our clients with the tools, services and advice they need to plan, design, implement and support successful operations in a challenging and rapidly evolving health care environment.

Sometimes your project team may need a project management boost. Our expert project managers are helping teams across the country to succeed at driving transformational change. Depending on your internal resources and their structure, we can deploy a single person or small team to drive the project towards your goals, equipping your team for success in transformational implementations. We are experts in standing up project management offices for projects that bring demonstrable value to our clients, building internal resources from the ground up. We ensure your success from team design through position definition, from measure definition through reporting standards, from start to the smooth transition of responsibility to your internal project team.

The "lift" is real, but so are the rewards of true health care transformation. We help your get over the "lift," and get back to the work of making an impact in the lives of your patients.